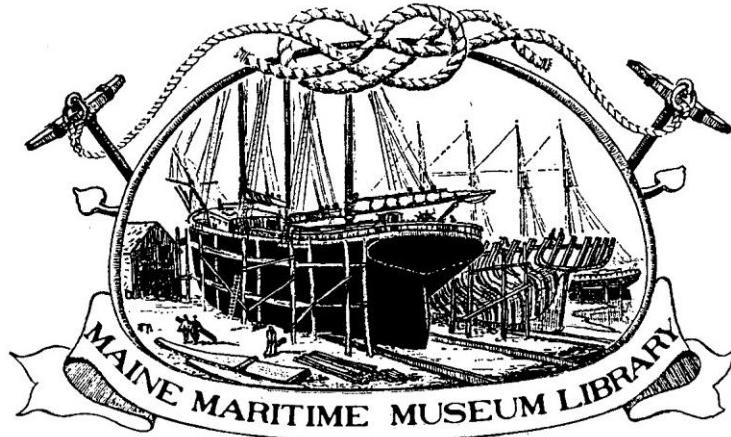


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**Inventory for
Manuscript Collection
MS - 674**

Charles Cushing Notebooks

**1887-1898
Bulk: 1890-1892**

by
Elisabeth Meier
August 2019

4 volumes
0.1 linear feet
Accession no. 2001.26.3

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Abstract

Charles Cushing (1863-1905)

Notebooks, 1887-1898

Bulk: 1890-1892

4 volumes

Fisherman and sea captain from Bucksport, Maine.

Four notebooks kept by Charles Cushing, who commanded fishing vessels from Bucksport, Maine. The volumes contain journals from three separate seasons in the Grand Banks cod fishery, as well as records of fish caught, vessel accounts, letter drafts, and other miscellaneous material about Cushing's maritime career. Cushing's voyages on the Bucksport schooner *Hannah Coomer*, owned by T.M. Nicholson, are particularly well documented.

Museum Purchase.

MS-675. Accession #2001.26.3.

Finding aid (folder level control) in repository.

Added entries—persons:

Cushing, Charles (1863-1905)

Nicholson, Thomas M. (1852-1928)

Added entries—corporate bodies (including vessels):

Hannah Coomer (schooner)

Herbert M. Rogers (schooner)

N.E. Symonds (schooner)

Added entries—key terms:

Bucksport (ME)

Cod fisheries

Fisheries

Fishers

Grand Banks of Newfoundland

Log-books

Schooners

Acquisition

This collection was purchased from Dan Casavant in 2001.

Restrictions

There are no restrictions on this collection.

Physical Condition

The volumes are in fair condition. Covers are battered and worn, but bindings are mostly solid. Text is clear and legible in all volumes. The third volume has some deep insect damage to

the back coverboard; the fourth has multiple loose pages. Pages were cut from all four volumes prior to arrival at the museum.

Historical Note

Charles F. Cushing (1862-1905) was a fisherman and sea captain from Bucksport, Maine. He spent most of his documented career in the Grand Banks cod fisheries. In his early career, he sailed vessels from Gloucester, but later joined T. M. Nicholson's Bucksport-based fishing fleet.¹ In 1891, Cushing took command of the *Hannah Coomer* (schooner), owned by Nicholson. After several seasons, he moved on to command Nicholson's *N.E. Symonds* (schooner), followed by the *General Cogswell* (schooner).

As a captain on Nicholson's schooners, Cushing took annual trips to the Grand Banks between April and October to fish for cod. In the winters, he pursued a mix of maritime activities, including shorter fishing trips, and carrying cargos to Boston.

Cushing married Leila M. Wardwell in 1886. They had one son, Arthur M. Cushing, born in 1890.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of four notebooks kept by Charles Cushing that document his activities in the Grand Banks cod fishery and other maritime endeavors. Cushing used these volumes for rough logs, letter drafting, accounts, calculations, and more. The subjects included are correspondingly varied, but mostly related to the cod fishery based in Bucksport.

The volumes contain journals or rough logs for three trips to the Grand Banks, in 1887, 1890, and 1891. Entries include comments on weather, sailing conditions, codfish and bait caught, and occasional notes on location. The 1887 trip, on an unidentified vessel, apparently ended in near-mutiny, but the others document complete seasons on the banks for the schooner *Hannah Coomer*.

The remainder of the entries are less complete. There are records of daily catch, counted in tubs, scattered accounts for the schooners *Hannah Coomer*, *N.E. Symonds*, *Herbert M. Rogers*, and *Carrie A. Pitman*, along with occasional accounts with individual crew members. There are copies of letters that Cushing wrote to T.M. Nicholson, his managing owner, and others about the challenges of outfitting and crewing fishing vessels. There are also accounts that appear to record Cushing's own work in the coasting trade off-season, both in Bucksport and on short voyages around New England. Some family members may have used spare pages in the volumes to practice penmanship as well.

¹ In addition to owning a fleet of Grand Banks fishing schooners, T.M. Nicholson also processed and packed fish in Bucksport, specializing in cured and packed boneless cod and smoked herring. In 1893, he was noted as "One of the richest vessel owners on the [Penobscot] River." "Nearly a Riot," *Portland Daily Press* (27 November 1893), *Belfast Republican Journal* (13 February 1908).

Box and Folder List

Box Folder

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | Notebook, 1887-1888, 1898: <i>Herbert M. Rogers</i> (schooner) and <i>N.E. Symonds</i> (schooner) |
| 2 | | Notebook, 1890-1891: <i>Hannah Coomer</i> (schooner), <i>N.E. Symonds</i> |
| 3 | | Notebook, 1891: <i>Hannah Coomer</i> (schooner) |
| 4 | | Notebook, 1891-1892, 1894: <i>Hannah Coomer</i> (schooner) |